

Remarks

Claim 15 has been cancelled. Claims 3, 7 and 16-18 are currently amended. After entry of this amendment, claims 1-14 and 16-26 should be pending.

I. Cancellation of Claim 15

Claim 15 is cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 15 is cancelled for economic reasons and to expedite prosecution of the other remaining claims, which are allowable. Applicants reserve all rights to pursue claim 15 and/or other similar claims in a continuing application.

II. Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 15 was rejected under 35 USC § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,074,771 (Cubukcu et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,673,436 (Kawaguchi et al.). Claim 15 has been cancelled, so this rejection is mooted.

III. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication of claims 1-14 and 19-26 as allowable and the Examiner's indication that claims 16-18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants believe that claims 16-18 should be allowable as presented, but in the interest of expediting prosecution, claims 16-18 have been amended to place them in independent form.

To reduce excess claims fees, claims 3 and 7 have been amended to depend from allowable claim 1. The amendments to claims 3 and 7 do not narrow the literal scope of these claims.

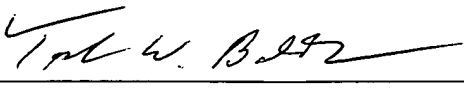
IV. Conclusion

For the above set out reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now in the application are in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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